April 4 '06

My dear Wise

I warmly congratulate
you on securing one of the most
interesting, and certainly the rarest,
of all 18th century political
curiosities. It has a great
literary interest: it is the type and
best instance of the genus squib -
a term often very inaccurately used.
"The Candidate" is the very finest
example of what is, or should
be, meant by a "squib".

It was known to exist,
for Mitford had seen it. But

when I edited th Works of
Gray in 1884 no copy of
th original was ~~known~~ any longer
forthcoming
~~exist~~. A few years after-
wards, the copy which it is
supposed that Milford used
was accidentally discovered uncatalogued
among th Webb Papers in the
Cambridge University Library.
No second copy has ever,
so far as I know, been des-
cribed, so you have a
treasure beyond price.

The thing was printed
in May 1764, with the object
of prejudicing the electors against
John, Earl of Sandwich, who
presented himself for the office
of Seneschal to the University
of Cambridge. He was not
elected, young Lord Hardwicke
being chosen by a very small
majority. Lord Sandwich is
believed to have referred to
the damning effect of "The
Candidate" when he said
"I have my private reasons

for knowing W. Gray's
absolute inveteracy."

I am more delighted
than I can say to think
that this "Curiosity of literature"
will adorn your splendid
collection. That is exactly
as it should be.

Always sincerely

Edmund Gosse

autobiographically.

Now, will you do me a very great kindness?

You possess Gray's "The Candidate". It was believed that 2 copies of this poem existed, but that which used to be among the Webb Papers in the Cambridge University Library has disappeared. The closest search has failed to retrace. Your copy therefore appears to be unique. A young

friend of mine is editing Gray for the Oxford Poets. He wishes to print "The Candidate" from the original. Would you be so very kind as to copy it out exactly for him, and send it to me? He (and I) would be very grateful to you.

Ever sincerely yrs

Edmund Gosse

17. Hanover Terrace,
Regent's Park. N.W.

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My dear Wise

I have been away at Cambridge, and did not receive your envelopes till last night. Therefore excuse delay.

The Preface to the Bibliography is now excellent. You have completely justified the two phrases I questioned. On p. xiv I prefer the form "The ..... that he ....."

The Sword poem is excellently placed where you have printed it, & very curious

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THE CANDIDATE:

BY

Mr. GRAY.

WHEN ſly Jemmy Twitcher had ſmugg'd up his face
With a lick of court white-waſh, and pious grimace,
A wooing he went, where three Siſters of old
In harmleſs ſociety guttle and ſcold.

Lord! Siſter, ſays Phyſic to Law, I declare
Such a ſheep-biting look, ſuch a pick-pocket air,
Not I, for the Indies! you know I'm no prude;
But his noſe is a ſhame, and his eyes are ſo lewd!
Then he ſhambles and ſtraddles ſo oddly, I fear—
No; at our time of life, 'twould be ſilly, my dear.

I don't know, ſays Law, now methinks, for his look,
'Tis juſt like the picture in Rocheſter's book.
But his character, Phyzzy, his morals, his life;
When ſhe died, I can't tell, but he once had a wife.

They ſay he's no Chriſtian, loves drinking and whoring,
And all the town rings of his ſwearing and roaring,
His lying, and filching, and Newgate-bird tricks :—
Not I,—for a coronet, chariot and ſix.

Divinity heard, between waking and dozing,
Her ſiſters denying, and Jemmy propoſing ;
From dinner ſhe roſe with her bumper in hand,
She ſtroked up her belly, and ſtroked down her band.

What a pother is here about wenching and roaring!
Why David loved catches, and Solomon whoring.
Did not Iſrael filch from th' Ægyptians of old
Their jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold ?
The prophet of Bethel, we read, told a lie :
He drinks; ſo did Noah : he ſwears ; ſo do I.
To refuſe him for ſuch peccadillos, were odd ;
Beſides, he repents, and he talks about G--.

Never hang down your head, you poor penitent elf!
Come, buſs me, I'll be Mrs. Twitcher myſelf.
D--n ye both for a couple of Puritan bitches!
He's Chriſtian enough, that repents, and that --------.

They say he's no Christian, loves drinking and whoring,
And all the town rings of his swearing and roaring,
His lying, and filching, and Newgate-bird tricks:—
Not I,—for a serpent, chariot and fix.
Divinity friend, between waking and dozing,
Her fifers denying, and Jemmy proposing;
From dimper the rogue with her bumper in hand,
She frisked up her belly, and frisked down her hand.
What a potter is here about wenching and roaring!
Why David loved catches, and Solomon whoring.
Did not Ilael filch from the Egyptians of old
Their jewels of silver, and jewels of gold?
The prophet of Bethel, we read, told a lie:
He drinks; so did Noah: he swears; so do I.
To refute him for such peccadillos, were odd;
Besides, he repents, and he talks about G—.
Never hang down your head, you poor penitent elf!
Come, buss me, I'll be Mrs. Twitcher myself.
D—n ye both for a couple of Puritan bitches!
He's Christian enough, that repents, and that ——.

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